



FIRST THINGS FIRST

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SPECIALIST

First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board) is a public agency that exists to increase the quality of, and access to, the early childhood development and health system that ensures a child entering school comes healthy and ready to succeed. Passed by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First operates through a tax on tobacco products. Governed by a state board and 31 Regional Partnership Councils, First Things First engages diverse constituencies across the state to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a child and family centered focus that is coordinated and collaborative; a comprehensive systems approach with continuous inquiry, learning and reflection; and, transparency and strong accountability toward achieving outcomes that will ensure all young children start kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. First Things First acts in accordance with our Beliefs, Actions and Performance statements, which are attached.

Position Summary

Under the direction of and in collaboration with the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives, the Professional Development System Specialist (PDSS) designs, develops, and implements First Things First's approach to building Arizona's early childhood professional development system. The PDSS is an integral partner in the Strategic Initiatives (SI) unit and collaborates with colleagues in the SI unit and across other program, executive division, and regional division units. This position is critical to advancing FTF's efforts to create a comprehensive, cohesive, and high-functioning system that supports early childhood professionals' education and career development. The PDSS reports directly to the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives. This position requires approximately 20% travel throughout the state.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The ideal candidate enthusiastically supports the vision and mission of First Things First, and possesses the personal qualities of integrity, credibility, and competency. She/he has a solid grasp of, and unreservedly embraces, the complexity, opportunities, and challenges of creating Arizona's early childhood professional development system. The candidate demonstrates obvious understanding of and comfort in working in a decentralized, transparent organization.

Primary Responsibilities

- Collaborates with the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives and other FTF colleagues to establish methods, timelines, mechanisms, and workflow for conducting an initial and ongoing periodic needs and assets assessment of Arizona's early childhood professional development system.
- Conducts initial and ongoing review of other states' efforts to create and improve early childhood professional development systems.
- Makes recommendations to the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives and other FTF leadership staff regarding the approach and direction of professional development system-building efforts.
- Assists Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives in planning and convening various groups of stakeholders and community partners as needed to design, implement, review, evaluate, and improve Arizona's early childhood professional development system.
- Supports the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives' efforts to identify core and specialized knowledge and competencies for all professionals serving children ages 0 to 5 in Arizona.
- Collaborates with FTF colleagues and external partners to develop and disseminate core and specialized knowledge and competencies to appropriate audiences.
- Collaborates with SI and other FTF colleagues to identify and pursue potential funding sources for professional

development system initiatives.

- Cultivates and maintains personal up-to-date knowledge of early childhood professional development, including a thorough knowledge of the professional development research and professional literature.
- Serves as primary consultant to the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives on early childhood professional development system-building.
- Develops written materials, presentations, and online content to advance Arizona's early childhood professional development system.
- Ensures all materials and efforts support FTF's Mission, Vision, and Goals and are consistent with FTF's Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices.
- Systematically evaluates the effectiveness of FTF professional development system-building efforts. Initiates, designs, and implements methods for data collection and analysis, and regularly uses evaluation data to systematically and strategically improve conceptual frameworks, materials, and methods.
- Develops Scopes of Work and Standards of Practice as appropriate related to FTF's professional development system building.
- Collaborates with information technology personnel and/or vendors to develop technologies to support Arizona's early childhood professional development system.
- Proposes innovations and improvements to Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives and SI Implementation Team.
- Regularly and effectively communicates progress, successes, challenges, and ideas to the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives.
- Identifies areas for self-improvement in order to perform assigned projects and carry out responsibilities to meet desired outcomes; actively pursues appropriate means and methods to increase effectiveness in those areas.
- Completes other activities and duties as assigned by the Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives.

Qualifications

- Thorough knowledge of and a minimum of 5 years previous experience in early childhood professional development and systems-building, including substantial knowledge of:
 - a) The relationship of high-quality early childhood professional development systems and quality improvement and rating systems;
 - b) The challenges and opportunities of linking teacher quality to child outcomes;
 - c) The effects of children's relationships with their teachers/caregivers on children's development and school readiness;
 - d) Arizona's higher education systems: institutions' degree requirements, culture, and mechanisms for articulating coursework within and between institutions;
 - e) Early childhood credentials, degrees, professional development pathways, career ladders/lattices, & registry systems;
 - f) Models of early childhood professional coaching and technical assistance;
 - g) Methods of scaffolding early childhood professionals' adoption and implementation of developmentally appropriate practices;
 - h) Early childhood state and national professional standards;
 - i) Various models of systems-thinking and their application to professional development systems building.
- Commitment to a comprehensive systems approach and organizational planning that focus on clear priorities, realistic expectations, and vigorous assessment.
- Ability to clearly communicate early childhood professional development systems-thinking approaches to a variety of audiences.
- Knowledge and proficient use of library-information systems including peer-reviewed article searching, retrieval, storage, and use.
- Competent consumer of professional and research literature related to early childhood professional development systems and the application of that literature to systems-building efforts.
- Strong leadership, organizational, and project management skills.

- Experienced group facilitation skills that result in effective, agenda-focused meetings, collaborative successes, and desired outcomes.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively use technology including standard office software programs, project management software, presentation software, online learning technologies, standard office equipment, and other communication devices.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and ability to consistently produce professional-quality materials.
- Strong interpersonal relations and oral communication skills necessary to effectively articulate program goals with sensitivity to ethnic, cultural, and local community differences.
- History of collegial, professional interactions with a wide variety of internal and external colleagues and partners, and of creating and fostering a mutually respectful workplace environment where diverse contributions and perspectives are valued.
- Entrepreneurial style and ability to think critically and address problems resourcefully.
- Commitment to uphold high ethical standards and promote sound business practices.
- Ability to ensure public transparency and accountability, as well as measure and improve outcomes appropriate for organizational goals.
- Agility and capability to work within a fast-moving environment, while also driving toward clarity and solutions; demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities.
- Graduate degree from an accredited college or university in early childhood education or special education, early childhood development, public policy, public administration, or related field. Although a graduate degree is strongly preferred, an undergraduate degree with substantial experience and exceptional expertise may be considered in lieu of a graduate degree.

Review of resumes will begin on Monday, September 26, 2011 and continue until the position is filled. For consideration please submit a cover letter, comprehensive resume, and three professional references to:

www.azstatejobs.gov

This position is not covered by the State Personnel Merit System, but the State of Arizona provides a comprehensive benefits package, including a top-rank retirement plan, low cost health and dental coverage, supplemental policies such as vision and short-term disability, and generous leave programs. Salary range for this position is \$60,000 to \$70,000.